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Iowa Drug Policy Coordinator Hails Renewed Prescription “Take Back” Program

DES MOINES – Iowa Drug Policy Coordinator Steve Lukan today applauded a recent decision by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to reinstate its National Prescription Drug Take Back program, beginning with the next special collection on Saturday, September 26.

“Prescription drug and opioid abuse are fast growing threats, and many of the substances being misused are obtained from friends and family members, including the home medicine cabinet,” said Lukan. “It’s imperative Iowans have a safe and environmentally sound method to dispose of unused medicines.”

“Thanks to the leadership of the DEA, and to the support of Senator Grassley and other members of Iowa’s congressional delegation, we stand a better chance of reducing the illegal diversion and abuse of controlled prescription drugs in Iowa and across America,” said Lukan. (See a statement issued by Senator Grassley’s office below.)

During the first four years of the DEA’s Take Back program with local law enforcement, pharmacies and community groups, nearly 26 tons of unused prescription drugs were collected in Iowa. Nationwide over that time, collections totaled 2,432 tons of obsolete medicines.

“I also commend the nearly 50 local law enforcement agencies and pharmacies that have established *permanent* drop-off sites to collect controlled prescription medicines in Iowa, and encourage others to follow suit,” said Lukan.

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Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the Caucus on International Narcotics Control, was among several senators who urged the Drug Enforcement Administration to re-instate a popular take-back program for unused opioids and other prescription drugs. The Drug Enforcement Administration confirmed in a letter to Grassley that it has re-instated the program. Grassley was an original cosponsor of the *Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010*, which became law, and encourages drug take-back efforts. Grassley made the following comment on the re-instatement.

“Iowans turned in literally tons of unused prescription drugs under the program. Getting medicines out of the house, where they can be taken by teen-agers or used beyond the need for the prescription, is important for reducing opioid abuse and addiction. I appreciate the Drug Enforcement Administration’s turn-around on this program. The more options we have to reduce the scourge of opioid addiction, the better.”